

## HISTORY OF SARAH ELIZABETH GILES MURDOCH

Sarah Elizabeth Giles, the daughter of George M. and Mary Elizabeth Mayoh Giles, was born in Heber City, Utah, on December 4, 1878.

Sarah spent her childhood days on the James Davis ranch, where her father moved his family when she was eight years old. The ranch was located seven miles north of Heber City and was known at that time as Elkhorn. Later, they returned to their home in Heber, which is located on the corner of 1st South and Main. The large sandstone home still stands today, although it has changed hands many times. The home has been used as living quarters, barber shop, doctor's office, floral shop, and is presently being occupied and used as a ceramics shop.

Sarah's father hauled freight between Heber City and Park City for the A. C. Hatch Company. In order to supplement the family income, Sarah would follow along behind her father driving another team and wagon loaded with freight.

Sarah attended the old Sleepy Hollow School, which was located on the corner of 2nd West and 3rd South in Heber City. She later attended and graduated from the Wasatch Stake Academy. She was always a faithful church worker, until her health and age prevented her from serving. She taught in the Primary for a number of years, was first counselor in the Stake MIA, was a Relief Society visiting teacher, and also served as assistant secretary in the Ward Relief Society. She also was a member of the Sunday School choir in 1896.

In addition to taking care of her home and family, Sarah also was a midwife for a number of years, working with Dr. W. R. Wherritt and Dr. T. A. Dannenberg. After her husband became ill and unable to work, you could see Sarah helping out in any way that she could, in the fields and at home, milking cows, cutting wood, feeding the animals, and working in the garden.

Sarah loved people, and especially the children, and the children showed their love for her by being in her home daily. As they grew older, the James and Sarah Murdock yard was a playground for all the neighborhood children.

In 1937, Sarah had a close call with her life, being involved in an automobile accident. Sarah, her son, Merrol, and his daughter, Merilyn, had been to the LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City to get James, her husband, who had been recovering from an eye operation. Shortly after leaving the hospital, they were involved in a two-car accident. James, Merrol, and Merilyn were badly shaken up and frightened, but without injury. Sarah was thrown through the windshield. Her scalp was cut and peeled back

from just above the eyes back to just above the ears. This being such a severe wound, Sarah had to remain in the hospital. It was not known for weeks whether she would recover from the injury. Dr. Karl Nielson, the family doctor from Heber, by chance, was at the hospital when Sarah was admitted. He performed the necessary surgery and also treated her when she was released and returned to Heber.

In 1952, once again Sarah had a narrow escape with life. This time, a severe stroke disabled her. Dr. Nielson had given her from six to 24 hours to live and suggested to the family members present that they notify the other members of the family of her condition. Once again, Sarah became well enough to care for her husband and home. She often stated that it was through the prayers of administering Elders and the family that kept her alive.

If medals were given out to people for love, kindness, and devotion, Sarah E. Giles Murdoch would have accumulated many. The kindness and love she showed to all she met, both young and old, and the devotion she had for her church, husband, and family was exemplary. She nursed and waited on her husband for many years, often having to bath and dress him. She had to tie his shoes each time he put them on as he had arthritis in his hands and could not do it for himself. Often, Sarah remarked to her family that she hoped and prayed she could remain on earth long enough to see James put to rest and given a proper burial. This was accomplished, as her husband, James, preceded her in death. Sarah passed away August 2, 1961, and was buried beside her husband August 6, 1961, in the Heber Cemetery.

Written by Grant B. Murdoch,  
with contributions from other  
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